Georgia Institute of Technology
Office of the President

August 29, 2006

The Honorable Tom Coburn
United States Senate
Room SR – 172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

This letter responds to your July 27, 2006 inquiry on the subject of federal research appropriations and institutional research funding policies. As a member of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, the National Science Board, and as co-chair of the U.S. Council on Competitiveness I believe the federal government plays a vital role in fostering innovation and sustaining a technically skilled workforce through investments in research. I share your view that these investments should be well managed and believe that this institution is providing sound stewardship for the federal funds it receives.

The Georgia Institute of Technology is committed to supporting a robust federal research enterprise that is primarily based on competitive peer-reviewed research. Between Fiscal Years 2000 to 2006, our federal research expenditures have expanded from approximately $145 million to over $222 million. Nearly all research funds are awarded through competitive peer reviewed processes. However a small amount of research funding–between 1 and 2 percent a year–results from requests made by our congressional delegation. In all instances projects we propose must meet a stiff set of requirements based on the following concepts:

- Clear evidence of national, state or local need
- Lack of widely available pools of competitive funding in the topic area or agency
- Demonstrable interest on the part of the funding agency in the topic area
- High probability for sustainable funding or demonstrable outcomes within a foreseeable time frame

Georgia Tech's full-time federal relations staff is responsible for managing all appropriations matters for the Institute.

For your information, I have attached descriptions of typical projects funded during the FY2000 - FY2006 period.

Please be assured that Georgia Tech is committed to stewarding all of our federal funding in a manner that maximizes intellectual and economic benefits for both our state and the nation. A study released this year and funded by Georgia's top ten companies showed that Georgia Tech provides a $3.9 billion impact within the state of Georgia and supports directly or indirectly the creation of approximately 44,400 jobs to the state. In addition, Georgia Tech graduates more engineers than any other university in the country. We also have a historic relationship and track record of innovative support to the Department of Defense.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance to you.

Sincerely,

G. Wayne Clough
President

cc: Senator Saxby Chambliss
Senator Johnny Isakson

Attachment

Types of Directed Funding Projects FY 2000- FY 2006

National Textile Center Consortium: The mission of the NTC is to enhance the knowledge base for the continuing viability of the U.S. Fiber/Textile/Fiber Products/Retail complex. Eight leading textile engineering and science universities comprise the NTC along with several affiliated organizations. NTC research funding is guided by a strict set of criteria administered by a technical advisory committee in coordination with the Department of Commerce. Only research that continues to produce results retains funding. In Georgia, textiles remain an important part of the State's employment base. Georgia Tech has been given a specific mission by the State of Georgia to assist traditional industries wherever possible and the NTC is a compatible effort to that mission. NTC is the only research effort in the U.S. specifically addressing fundamental research issues involving textile materials, manufacturing and environmental abatement and it is producing a new generation of skilled technical talent for the U.S. textile industry.

E-Strike: Working with the Army, Georgia Tech is a partner in a team research effort aimed at developing a low-cost, portable system of short-range, air-defense radar for detecting rocket, artillery, and mortar attacks. This type of threat is particularly prevalent in active conflict zones such as Iraq and potential conflict zones such as the border with North Korea. The Army identified the need for this research in their advanced planning process. Georgia Tech has a historic and well known expertise in advanced radar and electronic systems integration and federal funding for this project accelerated research efforts in this area.

Transportation Research Center: The Transportation Research Center at the Georgia Institute of Technology engages in cutting edge research using Georgia's multi-modal transportation system, including the world's busiest passenger airport that is also one of the nation's busiest air cargo port, one of the fastest growing seaports in the nation, and one of the nation's most extensive freeway systems.

This research initiative falls under the umbrella of the Georgia Transportation Institute, which along with Georgia Tech includes participation from the Georgia Department of Transportation, and six university partners in Georgia. In addition, the research is conducted in close collaboration with other state and local governments, and with the business community.

Research questions being answered include areas such as: Real-time application of advanced sensor and communication technologies to enhance transportation system productivity; Development of response strategies for transportation system disruptions due to either natural or man-made causes; Development of new models and analysis tools for use by state and local transportation officials; Investigation of new transportation and urban design approaches, especially in high growth areas; Development of innovative strategies for reducing transportation system congestion and enhance mobility for freight and passengers; and, application of new technologies for improving the security of critical transportation infrastructure.